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CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

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ON THE URGENT NEED FOR
REFORM IN OUR NATIONAL
AND CLASS EDUCATION

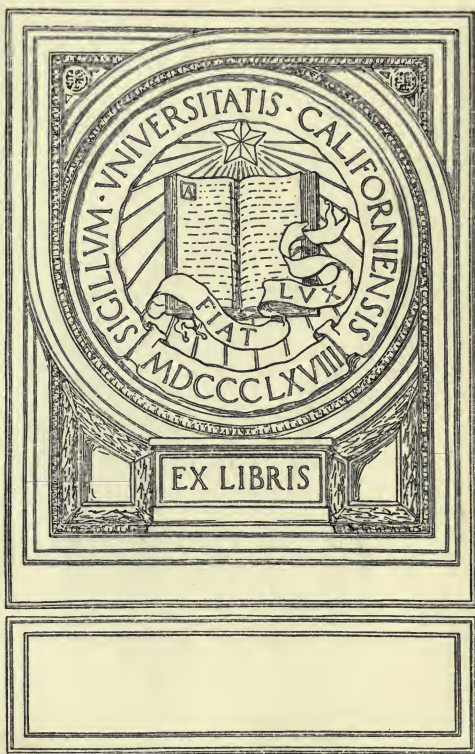
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IR HARRY H. JOHNSTON





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CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

ON THE URGENT NEED FOR
REFORM IN OUR NATIONAL
AND CLASS EDUCATION

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BY

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ON THE URGENT NEED FOR REFORM IN OUR NATIONAL AND CLASS EDUCATION

EVEN those among us who have not travelled outside their home area, have not been at any of the battle fronts, are merely thoughtful newspaper readers, must be aware that British politicians and diplomatists are, in a measure, blameable for the outbreak of the present War, and for the defective and even stupid measures at first adopted for waging it; and that many of the costly mistakes of British generals in the earlier East African, Palestine, South Arabian, and Mesopotamia campaigns and their miscalculations in France have delayed the progress of the Allies towards victory, and immeasurably increased the loss of life and suffering of the combatants abroad, and the sorrow of the bereaved at home. The opening months of the War supplied one or two glaring instances of incapacity in the higher naval commands, the first of which—the evasion of

the *Goeben* and *Breslau* and their arriving unhindered at Constantinople—added, probably, three years to the War's duration and three thousand millions to its cost. Perhaps the masses who thus appraise without exaggeration or injustice the defects in our statecraft, our military and naval strategy, are not sufficiently aware that it has been entirely due to a defective education among the few who govern and lead. No one can say with truth that we have failed to win the War, so far, through lack of bravery, even of the highest flights of heroism and sublime self-sacrifice in our fighting men; or that the nation behind the Government has not cheerfully submitted—in Great Britain, at any rate—to every measure, to every war sacrifice, imposed by the Government.

We were, of course, comparatively unready for the War, though, with five weeks' clear warning of what was coming, our preparations at the War Office might have been far more advanced. Most far-sighted persons acquainted with the Continent of Europe and conversant with foreign journals and the discussions going on in German books and reviews might have noted this struggle, or the probabilities of this struggle, coming ever nearer and nearer after the Agadir crisis of

1911 and the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. Indeed, the foundations of this cataclysmic attempt to subjugate Europe were laid by Germany after the Anglo-French Agreement in 1904. But our comparatively uneducated statesmen who came into office at the close of 1905 were blind to the portents. They possessed little or no knowledge of French or any other language but their own (except some fragments of half-forgotten Greek and Latin); they had travelled singularly little about the world outside Britain. For most of them autumn trips to Switzerland and Easter trips to Paris and the Riviera represented all they knew of foreign countries, while their visual knowledge of the British Empire was confined to an Admiralty yachting cruise to Gibraltar and Malta. They had, therefore, neither the sense to conjure the peril by far-reaching negotiation, by a bold grasping of the nettle of German discontent; nor a knowledge of the peril sufficient to avert it by a bold policy of preparation. A study of the European, Asiatic, African situation after the Russo-Japanese War by competently educated statesmen in Great Britain would have resulted, I believe, in a straight talk with Labour, with the brain-workers in the professional classes, and the hand-workers of the proletariat. They would have explained to

them that an Empire like ours, dependent for its main defence on the money and the military capacity of 56 or 57 millions of white people—and mainly on the people of Britain itself—cannot be considered safe from attack in one vital direction or another unless its manhood will consent to compulsory military training and service. They would have realized that our Navy alone could not suffice to defend and save Great Britain and the British Empire. Even a hundred and eighteen years ago, under much easier conditions of warfare, we realized that.

But the preponderating mass of the workers—the hand-workers—to whom they appealed would have shrunk from this sacrifice, again mainly because of a defective education. Never having learnt in the State or Church schools anything of the history, geography, peoples, products, and advantages of the Empire to which they belonged, they would not have consented to place their lives and happiness at the disposal of a Government they never understood or trusted; perchance to find themselves fighting in a rotten cause, or solely for the benefit of dreamers, theorists, or speculators. So in both ways a lack of the right education for citizens and rulers of the British Islands and Empire in the opening years of

the Twentieth Century militated against our being ready to face the German onslaught of August-September, 1914.

Unreadiness for the struggle, a wholly inadequate understanding of the scope of the struggle and the forces at Germany's disposal; an Admiralty refusing to contemplate the effects of undersea warfare; a War Office and Admiralty alike scornful of the possibilities of aviation; a War Office ignorant of the power of the highest explosives and the capacities of the latest guns; diplomatists who could not speak Russian and knew nothing of Russia, or Rumania, or Turkey, or Greece; the persistent employment of blunderers in every department of State and in every service, because they belonged in some way to the official clique, the family clique, the college clique, the newspaper clique that was in power, or because they had social, parliamentary, or caucus influence; generals and admirals holding high commands by seniority of service or by marriage influence and not by merit: these were the causes of our defeats, checks, disappointments, and the dragging on of the struggle with the Central Powers into the last quarter of the fourth year, with the further prophecy of a former War Office official, Sir William Robertson, that the War is to last for

years more, to be an almost permanent institution with us.¹

And the primary cause of this holocaust of lives, this expenditure of treasure and resources, this maiming of our national and social life for a generation, perhaps for half a century, is the defective education imparted to the classes and the masses at the will and pleasure of a handful of officials and fifty or sixty obstinate schoolmasters and heads of colleges ; aided and abetted by the editors of our leading newspapers and reviews.

For we have not failed so far to win the War by our having anything but the most just cause, through any reluctance to fight and work with a martyr-like devotion on the part of our soldiers, sailors, aviators, mercantile marine, men and women munition workers, of ship-building operatives, miners, engineers, doctors of medicine and surgery, our clergy of all denominations, our women of all ranks. We have not failed through lack of money or of great resources in the essentials of life,

¹ It required after the forty-fourth month of war that the Germans should be seriously threatening Paris, the Channel Ports, and the existence of the British and French Armies for the War Office to be sufficiently moved to issue the announcement that henceforth promotion to the higher commands would be by merit, and not by seniority.

through want of ships or of Allies. We are backed by the whole soul of our Empire ; we have India with us ; we are allied with the greatest power in the world, the United States, with France and Italy, with Japan and China, with Brazil and Portugal, with Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro : we have nearly all Africa on our side. Against us are arrayed, it is true, eighteen millions of the strongest fighting men of Central and South-East Europe and Hither Asia ; but these are cut off from the great oceans, they have nothing comparable with our resources in raw materials ; yet they have the trained intelligence of the German, the science of Germany behind them. I know, among the many fatuities that have been uttered in the Press and in the pulpit to excuse our educational failure, it has been held that if we had imitated the Germans in thoroughness and scope of education we might have been as "wicked as they were."

This remark was repeated to me not long ago by a great captain of British industry, who believes in the public school and "the stamp it sets upon a man." I could not help replying : "But surely if you are out to fight the Devil you would be wise to use his weapons if they were more efficient than your own?" We could be as well educated as the Germans

in the science of warfare or in the industries of commerce without passing on to imitate their cruelties, their ruthlessness, or their coarseness. A gentleman may have learnt boxing enough to cope with a street bully, but he does not thenceforth proceed to act like one. As far back as 1900 the education of military officers in Germany was contrasted (to its advantage) with that given at Sandhurst and Woolwich, or in the schools or universities that prepared for those military colleges; but Mr. Balfour, smiling, put the question by. He, as Premier, gave no sequence to Sir C. Grove's Report in 1900, or to the Report of the Akers-Douglas Committee in 1902. Mr. Asquith, as Premier and War Minister; Lord Haldane and Colonel Seely, as Secretaries of State for War; Sir William Robertson, as Director of Military Training, left the education of officers where they found it, in much the same condition as that denounced by Dr. Miller Maguire in 1902.

This is the type of education which still prevails at Sandhurst and at Woolwich; above all, it is important for you to remember it was the type in the eighteen-eighties, nineties, and opening years of the Twentieth Century which fashioned the minds of the generals of to-day. It was a type which lumped geography in

general (the most important of all studies for a soldier) with "English"—mark you, not British, Irish, Imperial—history, and only gave it about 600 marks (as against 4,000 for Greek and Latin); which ignored such essential subjects, for an army that fights all over the world, as ethnology, meteorology, botany,¹ zoology (not forgetting bacteriology and entomology), hygiene, modern history—other than English—modern languages, other than French or German (and no encouragement was—is—given to candidates to take up both French *and* German). In 1864 the subjects offered to Woolwich and Sandhurst candidates, to young men striving for commissions in the British Army, were actually of more modern range or quality than those in the curricula of to-day and of the years since—in the early 'eighties—the headmasters poisoned our education at the fount; for in 1864 Hindustani was—most properly—among the subjects (besides French and German); there was the

¹ Ruskin, who, in his *Crown of Wild Olive*, endeavoured to deal with the absurdities in military education, pointed out: "Your knowledge of a wholesome herb may involve the feeding of an army, and acquaintance with an obscure point of geography the success of a campaign." I would also add in regard to a knowledge of botany that it might greatly affect for the better questions of forage for transport animals, cavalry horses, or camels.

history of the British Empire, besides the history of England; and there was (states Dr. Miller Maguire) "an excellent course of geography."

Seemingly it was in the early 'eighties that the influence of the public schools with the Treasury and its Civil Service Commissioners, the War Office, and all Government departments that in any way guided class education, prevailed to stultify the education of military and naval officers, of diplomatists, of Indian and other Civil servants. In that year the late Lord Salisbury is credited with having said or written: "The upper classes have made their education and the education of the Empire subservient to the whims of six clerical schoolmasters who opposed the teaching of any English literature or modern history, of social or political economy or hygiene, or even gymnastics and riding, and repudiated every branch of science except pure mathematics." Dr. Maguire, who quotes this passage in his address of July, 1902, at the Royal United Service Institution, added these prophetic words: "The English upper and middle classes, in spite of the protests of Scotch and Irish and Colonial folk, and of every practical man in England itself, hearkened to these schoolmasters. They thus sowed the wind,

and we are reaping the whirlwind." I wish Dr. Maguire had told us then, or at a later date, the names of these conspirators against the British Empire, so that to-day, or when we round up things after the War, we might take just vengeance on their memories or their persons.

They engendered, physically or psychically, Civil Service Commissioners and War Office officials, who shaped the entrance examinations of the commissioned army so as to draw in boys straight from the public schools, and exclude others. This policy was adopted under the belief that the public school curriculum was ideally suited for the production of military officers. "Accepting this belief"—I quote from the *Times* of June 9, 1902—"the Civil Service Commissioners have never attempted to give a lead to the public schools by dictating the lines which education should follow, but have made the examinations fit in with the education given, without considering whether that education was the best possible for preparing candidates for a military career."

The Akers-Douglas Committee—a typical piece of Government camouflage undertaken to appease public resentment over the gross mismanagement of the Boer War—pretended to reform this defect in military education; but

the curriculum they suggested, or approved, did not differ materially from that which, between 1894 and 1902, had produced army officers of the uneducated type so bitterly characterized in the *Times*' leading articles and correspondence columns of 1901-1902; in the *Morning Post* of the same period; in the contemporary writings of Spenser Wilkinson and Sir Charles Dilke; in General Sir H. L. Smith-Dorrien's Official Memorandum in India; Sir Evelyn Wood's, Sir Ian Hamilton's, and Lord Wolseley's evidence in 1901-1902. In 1902 many officers coming out to India, gazetted to direct commissions, were "so wanting in elementary education" that they were unable to cope with professional subjects—"they were more ignorant than any sergeant can be" (I quote Sir H. L. Smith-Dorrien's actual words). In December, 1900, 122 Sandhurst candidates were either "quite ignorant of English history or any other modern history," or their knowledge of these important subjects was very trifling.

The loud outcry against military maleducation, or lack of education, and the testimony of respected authorities on this vital question which followed the Boer War and the attainment to the Premiership of Mr. Arthur Balfour, were characterized by the *Times History of the*

South African War as "The Empire *versus* the War Office." But the War Office won, the excitement died away, and the unreformed public schools soon found no warmer or more illogical champions than the leader writers on the *Times* staff.....unless it be in the editor of *Punch*. I only rake over these ashes of a nearly cold controversy because it was that type of futile public school education (favoured by the War Office between 1884 and 1904, and lingering still) which gave us in course of time and "promotion by seniority" the general officer of the earlier and unsuccessful or disastrous phases of the War.

Some of you may wish to counter these unkind conclusions by pointing to the great successes which have enabled us to turn the Germans out of Africa, east, west, and south-west, to save and secure Egypt from attack on west and east, to reach Jerusalem and Jericho, Baghdad and Hit, to have freed Persia from a revolted gendarmerie and from Turkish invasion, to have put down a German-prompted insurrection in Baluchistan, and have kept Bulgaria out of Salonika. Others may point out the notable inventions brought into play during the struggle in France ; how we have copied the Germans in such and such a method, but on a scale of great improve-

ment ; how we originated "tanks," or made other inventions or plans, which they are vainly attempting to follow. Such defenders of the old *régime* might point to our amazing skill in the air, our men's deftness in hurling bombs, and their feats with horses, mules, and camels ; to the splendid character all round of our soldiers and of the vast majority of our officers ; and try to deduce from these items on the credit side that a nation which can number such achievements in its army, which can claim such a wonderful *morale* in its land and sea fighting forces, such extraordinarily well-behaved soldiers as are ours in France, or in Macedonia, in Palestine, or in Mesopotamia, cannot have much that is wrong with its education alike of the mass or of the class. To this I would reply, firstly, that the raw material we have to work with in youths, in men and women, is of the very best, whether it be taken from the castle or the cottage, the workman's dwelling or the Surrey villa, the crofter's shieling or the Edinburgh wynd ; secondly, that I am not so much quarrelling with the education of the *masses* (though that, I think, might be greatly improved and enlarged) as of the *classes*—the classes who lead, who give the orders, who work out the strategy, who send the masses to their death,

to their glorious victory or disastrous defeat ; thirdly, that the officers of the new army are often men of very high, very broad education, and the only complaint in connection with them is that they are not promoted quickly and far enough up into the high commands ; while, lastly and generally, I would venture to prophesy that if, with all the educational disadvantage that has hampered our national progress since the 'seventies of the last century, we have, nevertheless, turned out soldiers and sailors of great ability as well as of great courage (especially in the Indian Staff Corps, the Royal Navy, and the Royal Mercantile Marine), with a more modern education far more applicable to the needs of the British Empire in the Twentieth Century we should create a people of supermen and superwomen, on a par, it may be, with the nearly identical race mixture in the United States, but superior in efficiency to any other white nation.

With regard to the education for the Navy, especially in the days before the Great War, one is entitled to suspect that it left, and still leaves, much to be desired in the way of suitability, that it does not produce officers capable of profiting to the utmost from the splendid opportunities that a maritime career offers for seeing the great world with eyes

that have been trained to see and appreciate its wonders. We know from certain recent divulgings that boys of between 12 and 14, preparing for a naval career at high-class, expensive, preparatory schools, are made by masters of fifteenth-century or eighteenth-century minds to waste two, or even three, mornings out of the six working days in the week over such purely unnecessary developments of "classical" study as the making of Latin verses, when they might be far more profitably employed learning Danish, Dutch, Portuguese, Italian, or modern Greek. While being trained on board ship, further time and brain capacity are wasted over Old Testament history—which is no history in most cases; and, though it is quaintly termed "Divinity" at Winchester School, exhibits the Divine Power as seen through the puerile and semi-savage minds of Pre- and Post-exilic Jews. Not nearly enough science enters into the curriculum of young naval officers' studies. From the moment—say at 12 years old—when they are differentiating for a naval career they should be taught, first and foremost, the following subjects:—*Physics* (a very inadequate word, used to group together the sciences of electricity, magnetism, sound, light, heat, and the properties of matter),

meteorology and hydrostatics, chemistry (so far as it is applicable to a naval career), *mathematics*, enough *astronomy* for fixing a ship's position, *mechanics* (as related to ship construction and management), *geography*, *marine biology*, *modern history* (especially the naval history of Britain), *ethnology* (because of the varied human types with whom they will have to come into contact in patrolling and defending the British Empire and attacking its enemies), and *modern languages* (so that they may freely communicate with the more important nations of the civilized world).

In this last respect naval officers should be far better instructed than they are. Enough Latin and ancient Greek might be imparted to them in their preparatory schooling to prepare the way for the later acquisition of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romaic or Modern Greek. Great attention should also be given to German, but quite as much to Danish and Dutch, Danish also including the Norwegian dialect.

I shall be told by my critics that no individual naval officer would be capable of acquiring even an elementary knowledge, a smattering of so many tongues as the leading Romance and Teutonic languages : to which I reply, "Rubbish !" I am proposing nothing

more difficult than what I myself had achieved before I was thirty, and I am no cleverer than several thousand young men officering the British Navy. Of course, there will be many a midshipman or young lieutenant who is really without the aptitude for linguistics, yet is most valuable to the Navy because of courage and coolness, skill at mechanical things, grasp of the physical or mathematical sciences, accuracy of eye in observing the stars. But, on the other hand, there is many a bright lad who would learn Danish in three months with far more zeal and interest than he would apply to the making of Latin verses. He would not then, when in command of a patrolling cruiser in the North Sea, be easily gammoned—as one commander was the other day—into believing that a camouflaged German raider, with a crew of German pirates, was a peaceful Norwegian timber ship manned by Norwegian sailors. If we had had a few naval intelligence officers acquainted with Italian on the Mediterranean battle ships and cruisers in the first half of August, 1914, the *Goeben* and *Breslau* might not have succeeded—to our lasting chagrin—in evading our blockadingsquadron and making their way to, and through, the Dardanelles, so bringing Turkey and Bulgaria into the War against us.

And now for diplomacy and its share of blame for our present troubles.

No one will deny that, for good or ill—and mostly for ill—Russia was a mighty factor in the present War. It was Russia who precipitated the War by her intrigues in Serbia ; it was on the fighting qualities of the Russian Army and on the loyalty of the Russian people towards an alliance of interests that determined Mr. Asquith's administration to seek in Russia that alternative to conscription at home, that preponderating military force which, in conjunction with the mighty Navy of the British Empire, would make victory over Germany certain, should Germany adopt a policy of aggression towards any of the Powers of the Entente. Yet, although we had been committed to this Russian alliance in Europe and in Western Asia, the Foreign Office, under Sir Edward Grey and Lord Hardinge, gave no encouragement to the study of Russian by diplomatists or consuls. To the last—to this day, I believe—it was not a subject in which a candidate for Foreign Office employment might qualify, though he might do so in Greek, Latin, or Sanskrit ! You would have thought that, as Russian was the speech of about 140,000,000 white people in Europe and Asia, doing an immense trade with Great

Britain, it would have come under the cognizance of the Civil Service Commissioners and have been inserted in the curricula of the examinations for the Foreign Office, India Office, and Board of Trade. But no; with their Eton and Balliol, Harrow and Trinity, Winchester and Oriol minds, they ignored the chief Slavic language of the world, the speech of an empire of 9,000,000 square miles, on whom we were counting as our chief ally in an all-too-probable conflict with Germany-Austria. Our diplomatists and consuls went to Russia knowing only French and, may be, a little German. They therefore never got into touch with the Russian people, with anything more than the Court circle or a small nucleus of Chinovniks ; presumably they completely misunderstood Russia, and misinformed our Government as to her condition and her value as a military power and a steady ally. What has our present Minister of Education recently said in his newly-awakened interest in the new learning? He told the Commercial Committee at the House of Commons the other day that "if we had had in England only 200 educated men who knew the Russian language, the *débacle* on the Eastern Front might have been saved. The Government, however, could find none to

send out." (My own belief is that the Government of 1916 *could* have found 300 educated men in England, Scotland, and Ulster who knew Russian, but that, as they would not have been ministerial parasites or indigent younger sons of distinguished people, they would have preferred not to send them.) Mr. Fisher went on to advocate what intelligent people have been advocating for the last twenty years—that consuls and commercial travellers should be conversant with the languages and history of the peoples among whom they worked. But why not also the diplomatists? Why should the Consuls be supposed always to be the menials of the diplomatic establishment, to do most of the hard and dirty work, while the diplomatist gets the credit, the fine position, and, in the higher ranks, the large salary? The fact is that in the needed reform of the foreign service there ought to be no distinction between the Diplomatic and the Consular services. One test examination should serve for both, and all diplomatists should have commenced in the Consular branch of the service and first have served their apprenticeship to commerce before promotion to the Chancellery and the Embassy. But this is a reform that Mr. Fisher (probably), Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour (certainly), and

all other Conservative statesmen, would fight against untiringly.

To assert that all our diplomatists, some of our consuls, are fools, or even imperfect instruments, would be as monstrous as to pretend that all our generals were blunderers, and all our admirals timid of great adventures. Talent will out. Not even a public school education, or the subsequent cramming to pass an inappropriate examination (though as regards the main Consular service the curriculum is both sensible and appropriate), will prevent clever and capable men from representing British interests abroad. But we do not, through the training in vogue and the tests applied, get the best for our purposes. See even, after all we went through in the first two years of the War, when stupid diplomacy had deceived us about Russia, and muddled Bulgaria into the arms of the Central Powers, had led Rumania to ruin, had divided Greece, and had failed to secure elsewhere a right understanding of the cause for which the Allies were fighting, how little changed was the outlook of the Foreign Office on education. A retired ambassador, who would certainly not emit opinions displeasing to Whitehall, published a year ago a work on the Diplomatic profession. As the necessary

qualifications for the Diplomatic career, after citing good birth, good looks, good breeding, sound health, as necessary, he goes on to say :—

Science is not necessary. Geography, beyond elementary notions, is not of great value. The diplomatist will acquire what geographical knowledge he needs of the country to which he is appointed while residing at his post. Few men can know it in sufficient detail beforehand.

So he is to go out an ignoramus in all that most concerns British interests and the work that lies before him ! A novice, not knowing what to look for.

Again, a defender of the present system may point to some surviving ambassadors of the old school, like Lord Bertie, or to some famous name in the recent history of British diplomacy, and ask how I can complain of a system which produced public servants such as these. He would not know that in all probability the great names he cited were of men who ante-date in their education the public school blight of the Civil Service Commissioners which began to fall on the Foreign Office as on all Government departments from the middle 'eighties onwards. The Foreign Office, when I first knew it, and for long afterwards—in fact, until about the close of 1905—was a veritable home of enlightenment and a

place in which one met men of modern minds and versatile talents. Sir Edward Hertslet was one of the greatest and least hide-bound of historians. Far back in the 'fifties his predecessor, Norris, almost started the science of African languages in this country, and became an expert in phonology. Most of the Under-Secretaries were accomplished linguists, painters, musicians, and thoroughly interested and expert in the very sciences despised by the writer just quoted. One by one they died or retired, and the Foreign Office, taken over by Sir Edward Grey, was fully under the public school blight; was ideal in the outlook of the Treasury and the Civil Service Commissioners. It was ready in 1907 to eliminate geography from its examinations. A year ago the *New Statesman*, a review ordinarily favourable to the Liberal administration and its Coalition outgrowth, summed up the views of the Foreign Office, under the new *régime* which began in 1906, taken by the more intelligent potentates of the City. I quote it textually, admitting, however, that I am not able to substantiate its severest remarks from personal knowledge :—

Lord Grey was esteemed a masterly writer of despatches and admirable in his dealings with America, but otherwise very faulty. It was held that three times the Foreign Office has lost the chance of

winning the War in the Balkans, and that the greatest of all our mistakes in the Balkans have been Foreign Office mistakes. It was held that Lord Grey still stands for the old Foreign Office system, and that no attempt whatever has been made to reform it. The serious City now openly admits that our public school and university education, despite its admirable results in the hunting-field, wants a little altering. In this connection it is worth while to note the accomplishment of our highly educated Ministers in the use of the key-language of Europe. Mr. Balfour speaks no French. Lord Grey speaks a French disgraceful on the lips of a Foreign Secretary. Mr. Asquith's French is excessively bad. Mr. Runciman speaks fair French. Mr. McKenna speaks excellent, fluent, conversational (though not colloquial) French. But, then, Mr. McKenna never went to one of our great public schools.

The Colonial Office is not blameless from the point of view of modernity of education. To enter that Office a student submits to the same examination (Class A) as admits to the Foreign Office and Diplomacy, to the India Office, and several other important departments of State. And in this qualifying examination the same respect is shown, the same exaggerated quota of marks are applied to Greek and Latin, Greek and Roman *ancient* history, and to inapplicable and abstruse mathematics. Sanskrit is actually included; but none of the great Indian vernaculars. The Arabic is classical Arabic, no longer talked in the Eastern world of to-day. The botany and zoology are almost ridiculously useless

for the careers affected.¹ Candidates for some branches of the Colonial service (West Indies, African Protectorates, and Crown Colonies) are not necessarily examined at all, though they are encouraged—so far as Africa is concerned—to study African languages and Ethnology. It is to be feared that the requisite type of instruction is not always exacted from those who go to Ceylon and Malaysia, though the Malaysian service, nevertheless, contains men of great ability

¹ One way in which the Civil Service Commissioners or their professional advisers manage to get back on us who plead for more Science in education is to give us that Science in most inapplicable form. We are not wanting to produce Professors of Biology by these particular Civil Service examinations, but useful representatives of the nation abroad. In Zoology and in Botany the knowledge we should require of them would of necessity be superficial, and only such as might be of direct service to their work. In biological studies much of their attention should be concentrated on Regional Zoology and Botany; they should be expected to know, we will say, much about the distribution of the Palms (most of which are so important economically), the mammalian fauna of India or Africa or Asiatic Russia or Alaska, the relations of marmots with plague infection, the breeds of North African or Abyssinian goat, the habits of Fur seals, the varieties of the banana, the presence of the mulberry in the local flora, or the qualities of the local carob beans or olive oil. Instead of which they are examined as to the structure of Red Algæ, the most abstruse cytology of plants, or the comparative anatomy of deep-sea fishes.

and proved capacity. It has been surmised that in Ceylon an acquaintance with the two or three leading vernaculars was not insisted on, and that ignorance of the native languages and of native religious ideas and history lay at the bottom of the trouble which culminated in the Ceylon riots and their savage repression.

Criticism of a different kind might also be levelled at the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, and at the Board of Trade ; inasmuch as the preliminary training and education of candidates and appointees is not always or in all ways appropriate to the services to be performed.

It is curious to note the dislike to *Geography* in those who sit at the fountain-head of British rule. One would have thought that if one subject more than another was overdone, and absorbed an excess of our time in education, it would be Geography. Mere vanity as citizens of such an empire of 13,000,000 square miles, stretching from the North Pole to the South Pole, encircling the Equator, including all that is most wonderful and prodigious in African scenery, flora, and fauna, including New Guinea and its birds of Paradise and Equatorial snow mountains, including India with its unrivalled romance in history and scenery, India with Kashmir within its borders,

with Mount Everest on its frontier, its Himalayan and Malabar forests, its appendage of Ceylon—an earthly paradise; or Malaysia, Borneo, South Arabia, Australia, New Zealand; the lakes and alps and staggering conifer forests of Canada; Cyprus and its antiquities redolent of the Cyclopean age, of Greek art at its loveliest, of the Crusades and the transient rule of Shakespeare's Venice; the West Indian islands, any one of which might consider itself portrayed in Shakespeare's *Tempest*; Guiana, an epitome of Forested South America; the Falkland Islands and lonely South Georgia with their whale fisheries, penguins, their sea-monsters coming ashore to calve, and their strange Antarctic vegetation. As I review the Empire mentally, calling up pictures I myself have seen or which others have seen and implanted on my mental retina, I *marvel* that our governing class and its schoolmasters are so indifferent to the lure of Geography; I marvel how any man, however strong in Parliamentary influence and fluent in oratory, can, like Mr. Austin Chamberlain, attain to Cabinet rank and to the charge of India's affairs who can say of himself: "I am not a Fellow of your [the Royal Geographical] Society, and I am afraid if any geographical knowledge is necessary to qualify for that

position I shall never attain to it. My recollections of geography are of a painful study which, laboriously acquired, was inevitably quickly forgotten.....You.....will feel that these confessions hardly indicate my fitness for my present position.”¹

Geography is at a discount in most great schools, and very poorly treated in primary instruction. One fatuous excuse of the public school master is to repeat the apothegm that some Balliolite must have invented: “Geography is not a science; it is a study.” In whatever category you may choose to place an examination of the earth’s surface, the knowledge grouped under that heading is the most essential of all forms of instruction after reading, writing, and arithmetic. It is the most attractive field of research, full of pictures to any ardent imagination; and no one deprived of a vivid imagination should become either a teacher of youth or a Secretary of State.

The other great neglected avenue of education, especially to citizens of the British Empire, is Ethnology. This is even more

¹ Secretary of State for India. Of course, the fact that Mr. Chamberlain was no geographer did not weigh in the least with the Prime Minister and Cabinet of two years ago, most of whom were similarly lacking, even in the transparent honesty of disposition which inspired Mr. Chamberlain’s confession.

ignored by educationalists than Geography. Geography receives but scant allusion in the Report of the Committee appointed by Mr. Asquith in 1916 to inquire into the position of Natural Science in our school education (and it is noteworthy that no eminent geographer was on the list of members); but Ethnology is absolutely ignored—has not a single reference. Nor am I aware that in any well-known school, public or private, is Ethnology taught, though at most of the Universities, and notably in those of Oxford, Cambridge, and London, it occupies a prominent place in education. A lack of general knowledge of the Science of Man, Anthropology or man's physical features, Ethnology or the study of his mental development, his racial and national distinctions, leads to race prejudices, to racial misunderstandings, to Ceylon riots and Congo atrocities; it is supremely necessary to an Indian Administrator (and, to be just, the Indian Administration has of late much encouraged and subsidized ethnological research), to a Police Court Magistrate, to a British representative abroad, to any one anxious to solve the Irish Question, to understand the United States or Germany or Japan or China, or the Colour Question in South Africa, and the spread of Islam.

Archæology is to Ethnology what Palæontology and Palæobotany are to Zoology and Botany ; it is the science of old things, of phases of human culture that have passed away. Archæology, which includes within its thousand départements the consideration of the literature, religion, and history of ancient Greece and ancient Rome, is of fascinating interest to minds rightly attuned to a survey of man's past ; but as a subject of education it is an *article de luxe*, permissible only to the middle-aged and old, with well-earned leisure on their hands ; it is not sufficiently actual to receive more than a very cursory treatment in the curriculum of the young, who have first to deal with the world of to-day. But if, and when, Archæology is taught, there should certainly be given lessons in Egyptology, so that the British soldier, sailor, merchant, consul, administrator, may realize what a precious trust is at present confided by Fate to the care of the British Empire—Egypt, the cradle of Mediterranean civilization. Of almost equal rank in the same pursuit is the archæology of Mesopotamia and of Crete ; the archæology of India and Bactria ; and, from an Anglo-American point of view, of Mexico, Honduras, and Peru.

Mathematics, simple and advanced, are an

absolutely necessary study to some careers, in some arts, and as an aid to ratiocination in some studies. But many minds are incapable of grappling with complicated mathematical calculations, yet can be most usefully attuned to productive work which needs no algebra, no differential or infinitesimal calculus for its frame, its innermost support. Mathematics have been much misabused by the blind guides of youth during the last century of schooling. They are like the scaffolding which is essential to most building work, yet which is not required for a summer-house or a cottage ; or like the iron and wood skeleton of the clay statue or bust which is not needed for the marble figure, the plaster cast, or the entablature of bas-relief. Our blind guides, moreover, plunged youthful minds into the maddening intricacies of sines and co-sines, logarithms and quaternions, without any relevance to the useful sciences and arts of modern life, without any hint as to applicability. Trigonometry, for example, seemed needless mind-torture to me at school, until years afterwards I saw how it might be applied to the mapping and surveying of new countries. Decimals and logarithms, similarly, were of little interest or meaning until I realized the need for them in scientific calculations which

should produce some practical result in fixing latitudes and longitudes, or the heights of mountains. I agree with one passage in the Report on Natural Science in our Educational System, where it is said: "We have been informed that the teaching of elementary physics and chemistry in the public schools is often hampered by the fact that boys are ill prepared in arithmetic.....that they lack facility in making calculations, have an uncertain knowledge of decimals and of the metric system, and have no clear understanding of the meaning of measurement. The right remedy lies in a more intelligent treatment of arithmetic and hand-work in the Preparatory Schools. Advantage should be taken of the opportunities afforded by lessons in arithmetic, geometry, geography, and handwork, to introduce the idea of measurement, to give practice in the use of simple measuring instruments—a valuable exercise in manipulation—and, lastly, to develop both readiness in the making of calculations and an appreciation of the degree of accuracy to which results may be stated."

Even with all these lures to the courting of the hard-grained Muses of the Square and Cube, there are many minds that are thwarted and bewildered by Algebraic formulæ and

Euclidian geometry, which nevertheless might attain most useful development in the common cause if allowed to seek other channels of enlightenment. Simple arithmetic is necessary to all men and women, and no child should be allowed to go out into the world without a thorough understanding of its first four rules ; but advanced mathematics should be extruded from the qualifying examinations of such careers in science or under Government employ as do not require elaborate calculations in algebra or geometry ; and there are many such. You can be a first-rate cook, a minister of religion, a useful borough councillor or inspector of prisons, a skilful surgeon, a great painter or musician, a novelist like Dickens or Thackeray, a philosopher like Darwin, a poet like Wordsworth, without mathematics. On the other hand, you cannot be an effective artillery officer, a navigating seaman, a great inventor, an astronomer or a Treasury official, a bridge-builder—or even a great bridge player—without some acquaintance with mathematics. Mathematics should be offered to all, but only pressed on those who have minds of mathematical affinities.

As to the Classics, so much have they been abused in the expenditure of time, thought, and endowment in education that something

like a surcease should be enforced on the study of conventional Greek and Roman literature, history, and the syntax of those languages in their "classical" stage. All that is really good in the literatures of Greece and Rome in the "classical" period (as regards Greece between the seventh and fourth centuries B.C., and for Rome the Augustan age) has already been imported into, grafted on to, English, French, and Italian literature between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The rest can be put into an archæological cupboard and kept till we are less busy and have the leisure to reconsider it. Otherwise, much Greek and much Roman history require to be rewritten in the light of contemporaneous evidence found by archæological research.

A smattering of ancient Greek must be given to British boys and girls almost in their elementary education, so that they may resort thenceforth intelligently to an etymological dictionary when seeking the exact meaning of the many words we have coined from the Greek. The chief study of Latin must lie in the direction of its being the principal parent of French, Italian, Spanish, and the other Romance languages of modern Europe; and for this purpose much more attention should be given to Monkish Latin—to the fragmen-

tary records of the popular tongue of the ancient Roman empire, which, like monkish or mediæval Latin, was a far more reasonable tongue in its construction than the monstrous and artificial speech of the Augustan era. As to classical Latin, it can only be justly described as I once defined it. It is as though you first composed the words of your paragraph in a rational order, so that any plain man could understand what you had to say; then you caught up all these words, threw them into an urn, cast them out, and arranged them on the page in the accidental order into which they had fallen—nouns separated from verbs, adjectives from the nouns they were intended to qualify, and pronouns anybody's property. I can never believe that the populace of Rome spoke such a crazily-constructed language as that which the headmasters of public schools so admire: the order of their speech is much more likely to have followed the sane arrangement of Italian.

But as regards the discarding of these outworn studies of the classes we are adjured by, leader writers in the press, unwilling to desert their college chums, now headmasters of the great schools, not to favour science, or even mathematics, "at the expense of the humanities." And some self-made, industrial parent,

who has gained great wealth and a high position through a thoroughly common-sense education, takes alarm. However he may have been brought up, he wants his son to start from the level of the "classes," and he fears he may not be the perfect gentleman of the public school if some element known as "the humanities" is left out of his mental composition. So he takes the first opportunity of recanting his objections to a classical education. Now let us see what these humanities are: the word is an old-fashioned term for the literature of ancient Greece and of Rome in the Augustan age.

When the simple, straightforward Gospel of Pity uttered by Jesus the Christ captured the populace of the Roman Empire by its appeal to Love, its challenge to the stern and cruel laws of Nature, its confident belief in a life beyond the grave, it became—unhappily—the Gospel of the poor in spirit. The influence of early Christianity told against Science and Art, led to the knowledge of earthly things being despised, in favour of abstruse and tedious speculations on Theology. Undoubtedly the influence of the Christian Churches of Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and Africa brought about a complete gap in the intellectual progress of the Mediterranean world

between 200 and 800 A.C., when Arabs and Jews headed a great revival of "profane" learning. But as early as the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ the newly-formed monasteries, under the rule of St. Benedict, had commenced the study of pre-Christian Greek and Roman literature, which in those days, and down to the fifteenth century of our era, certainly represented the high-water mark of wisdom and discovery. To excuse their studies in any literature but that of the ancient Jews, the Evangelists, and the Fathers, these monkish classicists (who were to serve as a link between two civilizations) described the writings of classical non-Christian authors as "the humanities," contrasting them with the "divine" character of the Old and New Testament and of the patristic writings. "The humanities" became still more used as an apologetic term by the neo-pagan classicists of Catholic Italy in the time of the renascence of learning, when as yet there was little in the literature of Christian Europe to rival the dramas and comedies, the philosophy and science, the didactic histories, the orations, odes, and epics of Greece and Rome.

But how preposterous to limit the term implying special human interest to the writings of Greeks and Romans in the "classical" age.

The humanities ! They really commenced in the Hebrew books that form the Old Testament of our conventional Bible. Here first were penned human stories of striking probability and moving truth which for 2,000 years have claimed a farther-reaching circle of readers and listeners than the confines of Palestine or the Jewish colonies in Egypt. The Gospels are palpitatingly human. After the long period of sterility in literature that, unfortunately, the spread of vitiated Christianity brought about, humanism revived in the poetry of Omar Khayyam ; it permeated the stories written down as "the Arabian Nights" ; it infused the Song of Roland and the Romaunts of medieval France ; it made Villon's verses and Dante's epics appeal to twentieth-century minds ; and similarly preserves from oblivion the writings of Boccaccio and Chaucer. Rabelais and Shakespeare, Camoens and Cervantes, Milton and Molière, are immortally humanistic. Humanism grew into a new Gospel of pity, love, sympathy, and sanifying humour under the inspiration of St. Charles Dickens, the nineteenth-century Messiah, and in the parables of Hans Christian Andersen, the romances and poems of Victor Hugo and of Charles Kingsley. It is only a very small proportion of the classics with

which the teaching of the public schools concerns itself, and in that proportion the "humanities" are so often absent that it is a monstrous imposition on an ignorant nation to pretend they can be specially reached and enjoyed through the medium of two dead languages.

So far I have been—or I have tried to be—destructive in my criticism. I will, in conclusion, attempt some constructive proposals in regard to our national education.

The future Ministry of Education should be one of the most important posts in the Cabinet. The Minister of Education should control—to a great extent should lay down—the curricula of all recognized schools—State, Church, Public, or Private—and similarly the education given at the Universities, at military and naval colleges. No educational institution should be permitted which is not licensed, any more than the State permits unqualified practitioners to deal with the body, or unqualified lawyers to plead vicariously at the Bar; and no licence should be granted to a school that withheld its programme of instruction from Government criticism or refused to teach subjects recommended by Government. These principles need not in any way affect the teaching given on purely religious topics

in forms of religion that had been recognized by the Government. The ultimate test of the schools would be that the Government of the day would, so to speak, set the fashion in education, and establish it by fixing the subjects and range of subjects in the examinations for all State Services and employments. It would, therefore, not be profitable for any school or university widely to depart from the scheme sanctioned by the State.

To aid the Minister of Education and the staff of his Ministry in drawing up a curriculum of teaching in the schools, and applying this scheme and scope of education in varying ways to the State examinations, an Advisory Committee representing pretty faithfully the great interests of the kingdom—Science, Religion, Industry, Commerce — should be appointed to advise the Minister, say, every five years in laying down the curricula of subjects for the three courses of education: Primary, Secondary, and Specialist.

As a contribution to their discussions, I would suggest the following subjects as being appropriate to the first two grades of education, without attempting to go too deeply into those that are needed in specialized careers:—

A.—PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Elementary astronomy, history of the earth, generalized geology, meteorology, physics, chemistry, mineralogy, botany, and zoology. GEOGRAPHY. The special geography, zoology, and botany of the British Empire. ETHNOLOGY. The history of the growth of human thought. The history of the English language, with such references to Greek, Latin, and Norman French, to the Keltic tongues of Britain and Ireland, as are necessary to the understanding of the etymology of English. The pronunciation and literary use of English. English literature. (In Wales, West Scotland, Man, and Ireland special instruction would be given in the local Keltic tongues; in the Channel Islands in the Norman dialect.) The history of the United Kingdom (not forgetting Scotland, Wales, and Ireland).

Elementary human anatomy. Hygiene, or the science of health.

Elementary notions of sociology, of the constitution and government of the United Kingdom.

Elementary instruction in agriculture, horticulture, sewing, carpentry; in drawing, music, singing, elocution, and acting. In dancing and gymnastics.

B.—SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Mathematics. Geometry.

Shorthand. Phonetic spelling.

Physics (Electricity, Magnetism, Heat, Light, Acoustics, etc.). Chemistry. Astronomy. Mineralogy, Botany, and Zoology (with special reference to regional floras and faunas, to economic botany and zoology, to entomology and bacteriology). Palæontology and geology. GEOGRAPHY, regional and general, and especially the geography of the British Empire. ETHNOLOGY,

and especially the ethnology of the British Empire. Archæology and History, especially the history of the United Kingdom and the British Empire. The history of the United States and of France, and of the principal European, American, and Asiatic countries.

The world's literatures, particularly the literature of Great Britain, from the fourteenth century to the twentieth.

The laws and constitution of the United Kingdom and of the Overseas Empire.

Sociology and Economics.

Modern Languages : FRENCH, ITALIAN, GERMAN, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, Dutch, Welsh, Irish, Arabic, Hindustani, Persian, Hausa and Swahili, Japanese, Modern Greek, Malay, Tamil, Chinese.

Pathology and Hygiene. Veterinary Science.

Engineering and Mechanics.

Cooking.

Drawing. Architecture, especially in regard to rational house-planning.

Elocution.

Gymnastics and all reasonable methods of exercising and developing the muscles and perfecting bodily development. Riding, if possible. Shooting.

C.—TERTIARY (UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE EDUCATION).

Specialized teaching in all subjects mentioned above, and in abstruse subjects of possible usefulness.

H. H. JOHNSTON.

APPENDIX

THE CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURESHIP

AT a general meeting of the South Place Ethical Society, held on October 22, 1908, it was resolved, after full discussion, that an effort should be made to establish a series of lectures, to be printed and widely circulated, as a permanent Memorial to Dr. Conway.

Moncure Conway's untiring zeal for the emancipation of the human mind from the thralldom of obsolete or waning beliefs, his pleadings for sympathy with the oppressed and for a wider and profounder conception of human fraternity than the world has yet reached, claim, it is urged, an offering of gratitude more permanent than the eloquent obituary or reverential service of mourning.

The range of the lectures (of which the ninth is published herewith) must be regulated by the financial support accorded to the scheme; but it is hoped that sufficient funds will be forthcoming for the endowment of periodical lectures by distinguished public men, to further the cause of social, political, and religious freedom, with which Dr. Conway's name must ever be associated.

The Committee, although not yet in possession of the necessary capital for the permanent endowment of the Lectureship, thought it better to inaugurate the work rather than to wait for further contributions. The funds in hand, together with those which may reasonably be

expected in the immediate future, will ensure the delivery of an annual lecture for some years at least.

The Committee earnestly appeal either for donations or subscriptions from year to year until the Memorial is permanently established. Contributions may be forwarded to the Hon. Treasurer.

On behalf of the Executive Committee :—

(Mrs.) C. FLETCHER SMITH and E. J. FAIRHALL,
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(Mrs.) F. M. COCKBURN, *Hon. Treasurer*, "Pera-
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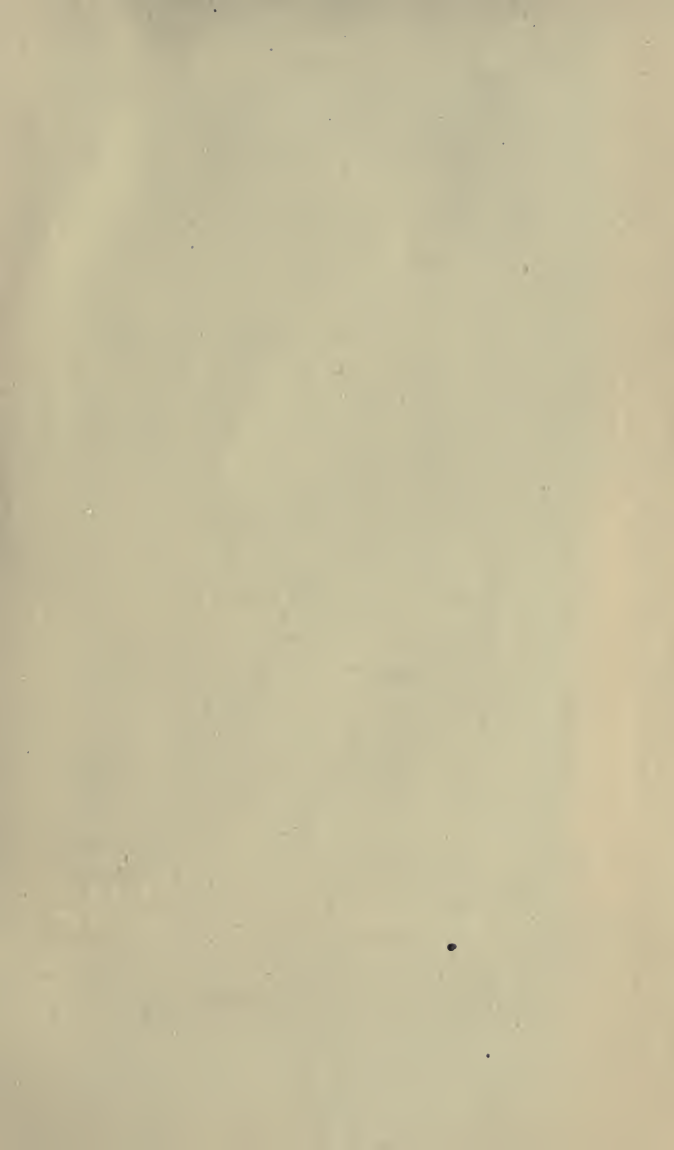
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